



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

September 16, 2005

News Release

ICE & FBI RECOVER STOLEN RENOIR & REMBRANDT MASTERPIECES IN INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATION

ICE, FBI and L.A. County Sheriff's work with foreign authorities to find works of art

LOS ANGELES, CA – Special agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and detectives from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) and the United States Attorney's Office (USAO) in Los Angeles - partners on the Organized Crime Task Force in Los Angeles - working with investigators in Stockholm, Sweden and Copenhagen, Denmark, announced today the recovery of major works of art that were stolen five years ago from a waterfront museum in Stockholm, Sweden.

On December 23, 2000, three armed bandits brandishing machine guns robbed the Swedish National Museum in Stockholm, Sweden, of three paintings: Auguste Renoir's "Young Parisian," "Conversation" and Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn's "Self Portrait" (c.1630). The robbers escaped with the paintings on a boat moored near the museum while employing distracting tactics, including tire spikes and diversionary car bombs in other parts of the city.

Members of the Organized Crime Task Force, including ICE, FBI, and LASD launched an operation targeting the international theft ring responsible for the 2000 robbery from the Stockholm Museum. During the course of the investigation, they worked closely with law enforcement overseas including the Copenhagen City Police (CCP), the Danish National Police (DNP), and the Stockholm County Police (SCP). The joint operation ultimately resulted in the recovery of two of the three paintings.

Renoir's "Young Parisian" was recovered in Los Angeles earlier this year and authenticated by the Curator of the Getty Museum. Rembrandt's "Self Portrait" was recovered within the past few days. The SCP had previously recovered Renoir's "Conversation" in July of 2001. Swedish authorities place the combined estimated value of the recovered paintings at approximately \$45 million U.S. dollars. Apart from the high monetary value of the recovered works, the paintings are also national treasures of Sweden.

The Los Angeles investigation into a local criminal enterprise led to the identification of an organized theft group in Sweden. Subsequently, the U.S. task force worked jointly with the CCP, DNP, and the SCP to coordinate efforts that resulted in an undercover sting operation. This

operation led to the arrest of four subjects and the recovery of Rembrandt's "Self Portrait" in Copenhagen, Denmark on September 15, 2005.

Information developed by the U.S. task force indicated that the suspects arrested in the sting were attempting to sell the stolen painting in Los Angeles and Sweden. The task force was able to introduce a FBI undercover agent with substantial knowledge of art to pose as the buyer/broker for the stolen Rembrandt.

On September 14 and 15, 2005, the undercover agent met with suspects in Copenhagen, Denmark to negotiate the purchase of the stolen Rembrandt painting. The suspects brought the painting to a Copenhagen hotel expecting to sell the painting for a large sum of money. Upon authentication of the painting by the undercover agent, the CCP and the DNP arrested the four suspects and seized the Rembrandt painting.

“This case is a testament to the power of multi-agency cooperation and tenacious police work. From the discovery of the initial lead to the recovery of the second painting earlier this week, the officers in this case logged hundreds of hours and crisscrossed two continents,” said Loraine Brown, Special Agent-in-Charge of ICE in Los Angeles. “And because of those efforts, art lovers around the world will again be able to enjoy these masterpieces for generations.”

J.P. Weis, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI in Los Angeles, said, “To have played a part in the recovery of these beloved national treasures of Sweden and indeed - of art enthusiasts around the world - is most gratifying. The FBI, in cooperation with our law enforcement partners in the U.S., and through the work of our Legal Attaches working with law enforcement abroad, will continue to develop information with regard to stolen art and strive to achieve the kind of results and success that we see in this case.”

Sheriff Lee Baca, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, said, “The personnel of The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department believe that organized criminal enterprises know no boundaries when embarking in illegal activity. Their activities defy international borders, and reach into the hearts of our local communities. This case illustrates the great lengths these criminals will go to in furtherance of their goals. The great cooperation of both federal and local law enforcement has produced the results we have today. I am extremely proud that this cooperative effort was able to produce such positive results on an international and local level. I would like to congratulate and thank all those involved; including Danish officials, whose diligence and hard work has resulted in the safe return of an invaluable and truly historic piece of art, but also in the apprehension of several organized crime figures who intended to use the proceeds from the art to fund further criminal activities.”

Those arrested have been identified as Dieya Kadhum, Baha Kadhum, Alexander Lindgren, and James Fowler, all of whom reside in Stockholm, Sweden. Prosecutors in Sweden and Los Angeles will work in consultation to determine where criminal charges should most appropriately be filed.

This investigation was a result of joint cooperation by members of the Organized Crime Task Force in Los Angeles (FBI, ICE and LASD, USAO), law enforcement authorities in Sweden and Denmark and the ICE and FBI Attachés in Copenhagen, Denmark, and with the considerable and knowledgeable assistance of the Getty Museum in Los Angeles.

This investigation in Los Angeles and overseas is continuing.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.